

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Committee Timetable 2024/2025

12 October 2023

Report of the Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider a timetable of committee meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members consider the proposed timetable of meetings, times and venues for the 2024/25 municipal year as set out within the report and appendices.
- (2) That a final schedule of meetings be agreed at this meeting, or, if significant changes are made, that the matter be referred to Council for decision at its next meeting.

1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 This Committee's terms of reference include "To agree the annual timetable of Lancaster City Council meetings and any other timetabling issues which may arise." (Constitution Part 2, Section 5, paragraph 8). A draft timetable is therefore presented to Members at this meeting to be finalised. This will allow accommodation to be booked and notice to be given of the proposed dates to Members and officers.

2.0 Proposal – start times, venues and number of meetings

- 2.1 Proposed start times, venues and number of meetings are shown at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 It should be noted that where the People and Organisational Development Committee and the Standards Committee hold hearings in respect of individual cases, which are likely to last for a half day or more, and require the attendance of witnesses and others, such hearings are held during the day. This is because a 6.10pm start time is not practical.

- 2.3 Regarding start times in general, the majority of Council meetings have been held in the evenings since 2015, with full council moving from a 2pm start to a 6pm start. It was felt that holding meetings in the daytime might preclude people who work during the day from standing for election, hence the move to evening meetings. The Committee may wish to consider, in light of the Council's financial challenges, whether start times for meetings should be moved back to daytime. There is a cost for heating, lighting and staffing of buildings outside of usual office hours.
- 2.4 Regarding venues for meetings, it is suggested that Committee meetings remain in the same venues as 2022/23, subject to a decision of Cabinet to be taken on 24 October 2023 regarding livestreaming of Cabinet meetings. Professional livestreaming equipment with the facility for e-voting was installed in the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall earlier this year for use for full Council meetings. However, the equipment is not portable, it is fixed in that room. Should Cabinet take the decision to livestream their meetings, the venue for their future meetings will no longer alternate between Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls. All Cabinet meetings will be held at Morecambe Town Hall, to utilise the livestreaming functionality.
- 2.5 The Committee may feel that Morecambe Town Hall should be used for all committee meetings to allow them to be livestreamed. The exceptions to this might be the People and Organisational Development (P&OD) and the Standards Committees. Very little of their business can be transacted in public due to the nature of the issues they consider, which tend to involve individuals and their personal data. If the Committee is minded to change venues for committees, officers would recommend that this is referred to Council.
- 2.6 The Joint Consultative Committee of P&OD Committee Members and Trade Union representatives is held virtually because this body is not required to hold face to face meetings, unlike the City Council's other committees.

3.0 Proposal - Dates

- 3.1 The draft timetable is shown at **Appendix 2**. It is based on the number of meetings held this municipal year, with one or two differences explained below.
- An extra P&OD meeting has been added on 6 March to consider the Pay Policy, which has to be agreed by Council by 31 March each year. This will allow the item to be included on the agenda for the Council meeting on 12 March, with the policy being made available to Councillors as soon after the 6 March meeting of P&OD as possible. So the total number of P&OD has increased from 2 to 3 per year.
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings have been re-scheduled to be held the week before Cabinet meetings to reflect the Committee's wish to undertake more pre-decision scrutiny.
 - Planning Committee in May has been moved to Tuesday 28 May 2024 because Monday 27 May is a Bank Holiday.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider this report and agree a timetable of meeting dates, times, and venues for the 2024/25 municipal year at this meeting.

- 4.2 Should any significant changes be proposed, for example, daytime starts for meetings currently held in the evenings, this committee is asked to make recommendations to Council for a final decision.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) None.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS It is a legal requirement that the City Council publishes its timetable of meetings by the commencement of each Municipal Year. Amendments can be made throughout the year provided at least 5 days' notice is given.	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS There are no additional financial implications for the proposed draft timetable. The costs of the meetings will be met from existing budgets. There may be some small savings if meetings are all meetings are held in the daytime.	
OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS , such as Human Resources; Information Services; Property; Open Spaces: None.	
MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
BACKGROUND PAPERS None.	Contact Officer: Debbie Chambers Telephone: 01524 582057 E-mail: dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

START TIMES, VENUES AND NUMBER OF MEETINGS			
Meeting	Venue	Start Time	Number of Meetings
Annual Council (Ceremonial)	Ashton Hall	12 noon	1
Annual Council (Business)	MTH	6:00pm	1
Council	MTH	6:00pm	9
Council Business Committee	MTH	6:00pm	3
Cabinet	Alternates: MTH/LTH*	6:00pm	9
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	MTH	6:00pm	9
Budget and Performance Panel	LTH	6.10 pm	5
Licensing Committee	MTH	1:00pm	8
Planning Regulatory Committee	MTH	10:30am	13
People and Organisational Development Committee	LTH	6:10pm	3
JCC	REMOTE	Flexible	2
Audit Committee	MTH	6:00pm	4
Standards Committee	LTH	6:10pm	2

*Cabinet may decide to livestream meetings from May 2024, in which case all meetings will be held at Morecambe Town Hall in the Council Chamber where the equipment is located. See paragraph 2.4 of the report.